



# Department of Justice

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Southern District of Indiana**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **EX-LOCAL PASTOR CHARGED WITH WIRE FRAUD**

### **PRESS RELEASE**

INDIANAPOLIS - Wayne Taft Harris, Jr., 36, formerly of Indianapolis, was charged on July 7, 2010, with wire fraud, announced Timothy M. Morrison, U.S. Attorney, Southern District of Indiana, following an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The indictment alleges that Harris contacted Third World Missions, a Christian faith-based organization located in Florida that operates bible schools and orphanages in various locations throughout the world, to obtain a loan with which to construct a church facility in Indianapolis. Third World Missions loaned Harris \$483,000 for the construction of the church facility proposed by Harris. The indictment further alleges Harris used at least \$144,584 of the loan proceeds for other purposes, including the purchase of a Mercedes Benz automobile, the purchase of a Christian bookstore and its inventory, and the purchase of a man's mink coat. Harris later sent a fax to Third World Missions in which he blamed an unidentified staff member for having misappropriated the funds.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Joe H. Vaughn, who is prosecuting the case for the government, Harris faces a maximum of 40 years in prison and a \$500,000 fine. An initial hearing has been scheduled before U.S. Magistrate Judge Kennard Foster for August 3, 2010, at 2:00 p.m.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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